

1 1. A system for use with a product, comprising
2 a user interface which is associated with the
3 product and enables local bi-directional communication,
4 between a user of the product and the product, of local
5 information concerning use of the product,
6 product information which is related to the local
7 information and is communicated between the product and a
8 remote party other than the user, and
9 means for taking action with respect to the
10 product or the user interface based on the product
11 information.

1 2. The system of claim 1 further comprising
2 an authoring system for use by the remote party for
3 managing the content of the local information and of the
4 product information.

1 3. The system of claim 1 further comprising
2 an analyzer of product information received at the
3 remote party, and
4 means for controlling the taking of action with
5 respect to the product or the user interface in response to
6 the analyzer.

1 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the product
2 information includes new interface elements and is
3 communicated from the remote party to the product.

1 5. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface
2 comprises a product module which may be disabled and enabled
3 selectively.

1 6. The system of claim 5 wherein the module may be
2 enabled in response to a trigger event.

1 7. The system of claim 6 wherein the trigger event
2 is initiated locally at the product.

1 8. The system of claim 6 wherein the trigger event
2 is initiated by the remote party.

1 9. The system of claim 1 wherein the local
2 information concerning use of the product is generated
3 during use of the product.

1 10. The system of claim 1 wherein the user
2 interface communicates queries to the user during use of the
3 product.

1 11. The system of claim 10 wherein the queries are
2 determined by the nature of the use of the product.

1 12. The system of claim 1 wherein responses to the
2 queries are stored in the product.

1 13. The system of claim 5 wherein the module
2 comprises hardware and software.

1 14. The system of claim 1 wherein the user
2 interface comprises one or more of a display screen, a
3 keyboard, a keyboard, a microphone, and a speaker.

1 15. The system of claim 1 wherein the means for
2 taking action changes the interactions permitted with the
3 user.

1 16. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication
2 between the product and the remote party passes via one or
3 more of broadcast transmission, wire, or a removable memory
4 device.

1 17. The system of claim 3 wherein the analyzer
2 analyzes product information ~~for~~ received at the remote
3 party from multiple users with respect to multiple products.

1 18. The system of claim 1 wherein the user
2 interface includes a natural language component.

1 19. The system of claim 18 wherein the user
2 interface includes multiple natural languages, selectable by
3 the user.

1 20. The system of claim 1 wherein the occurrences
2 of communication between the user and the product are
3 controlled by the user.

1 21. The system of claim 20 wherein the user is
2 enabled to terminate a communication with the product at
3 will.

1 22. The system of claim 1 wherein the user
2 interface includes a user control for selectively enabling
3 or disabling the user interface.

1 23. A method for aiding design of a product
2 comprising
3 creating a first version of the product,
4 including with the first version a user feedback
5 element which accumulates information on use of the product
6 by a user,
7 recovering the information from the user feedback
8 element,
9 analyzing the information, and
10 redesigning the product in accordance with the
11 results of the analyzing step.

1 24. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes information provided by the user with respect to
3 problems in use of the product.

1 25. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes information provided by the user with respect to
3 solutions to problems in use of the product.

1 26. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes information provided by the user with respect to
3 usability of the product.

1 27. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes demographic marketing information about the user of
3 the product.

1 28. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includ s information about the user's use patterns for the
3 product.

1 29. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes information about business processes using the
3 product.

1 30. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes analysis of tasks performed by the user with the
3 product.

1 31. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes analysis of the performance of the user with the
3 product.

1 32. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes transactions performed by the user with the
3 product.

1 33. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes user-suggested expansion of business relationships.

1 34. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 includes user-suggested improvements of processes.

1 35. The method of claim 23 further comprising
2 enabling the user to set a priority for response to
3 information entered by the user via the user interface.

1 36. The method of claim 23 wherein the information
2 recovered from the user feedback element comprises
3 information developed in the course of interactive learning
4 by the user.

1 37. The method of claim 23 wherein the step of
2 analyzing includes running user tests of information
3 recovered from the user feedback element.

1 38. The method of claim 37 further comprising,
2 prior to redesigning the product,
3 delivering to the user via the feedback element,
4 proposed redesigns of the product, and
5 recovering information about the proposed redesigns
6 via the feedback element.

1 39. The method of claim 23 further comprising
2 electronically sharing the information from the user
3 feedback element with a third party.

1 40. The method of claim 23 further comprising
2 providing a mechanism for compensating a user for
3 information accumulated in the feedback element.

1 41. The method of claim 23 further comprising
2 providing a mechanism for buying and selling results
3 of the analyzing step.

1 42. The method of claim 23 further comprising
2 giving access to the feedback element to a third party.

1 43. A method for providing information to a user of
2 a product, comprising

3 including with the product a user interface which
4 enables local communication of information to the user
5 concerning use of the product, and

6 delivering product information from a remote
7 location to the user interface,

8 delivering local information, based on the product
9 information, to the user via the user interface.

1 44. The method of claim 43 wherein the local
2 information is marketing information.

1 45. The method of claim 43 wherein the local
2 information is sales information.

1 46. The method of claim 43 wherein the local
2 information is customer service information, and further
3 comprising conveying user requests for customer service
4 information via the user interface and by remote
5 communication to a service provider.

1 47. The method of claim 43 wherein the local
2 information is training information.